

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the existing title with the following new title:

β1
A VIRTUAL COUPONINGTM METHOD AND APPARATUS HAVING AN IN-STORE FOR-
USE WITH CONSUMER KIOSK AND BEING ABLE TO VERIFY IN REAL-TIME THAT A
PRODUCT IS ELIGIBLE FOR DISCOUNT REDEMPTION

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure at page 52 with the following rewritten paragraph:

β2
A method and apparatus for distributing, generating, and redeeming discount Virtual CouponsTM, rebate or gift certificates or the like which may be used [on] in conjunction with a frequency card program ~~or the like~~. Virtual CouponsTM may be distributed electronically, for example, in the form of a diskette or CD-ROM software. ~~Software on the diskette or CD-ROM may prompt a consumer to call a 1-800 number for a validation number or code. During the phone call, telemarketing personnel may request consumer demographic and or identification information which may be entered into a centralized database.~~ Once the software is validated, a consumer may print out a list of selected Virtual CouponsTM displayed on a Graphical User Interface (GUI). When a product is purchased, the UPC code of the product may be compared electronically with a list of Virtual CouponsTM authorized for a particular consumer. An appropriate coupon discount may then be applied and the Virtual CouponTM may be considered "redeemed". Once redeemed, consumer ID information and Virtual CouponTM information may be retrieved electronically and used to update a central database. Accurate data may then be produced illustrating which consumers or groups of consumers are redeeming which Virtual CouponsTM. ~~Such data may be used for marketing purposes or to generate further diskettes for distribution targeting specific consumers or groups of consumers with specific classes of Virtual CouponTM offerings. The use of Virtual CouponsTM eliminates or reduces fraud, and allows a frequency card discount to be applied only a limited number of times.~~